

# Online mentoring as a strategy to increase rural student interest in health professions education programs



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## Background

**Context:** Recruiting rural students to health professions programs can help address shortages of rural healthcare professionals.

**Problem:** Rural students are underrepresented in health professions programs. Outreach efforts by health professions programs are often hindered by geographical barriers.

## Methods

**Intervention:** Rural eMentoring BC (ReMBC)

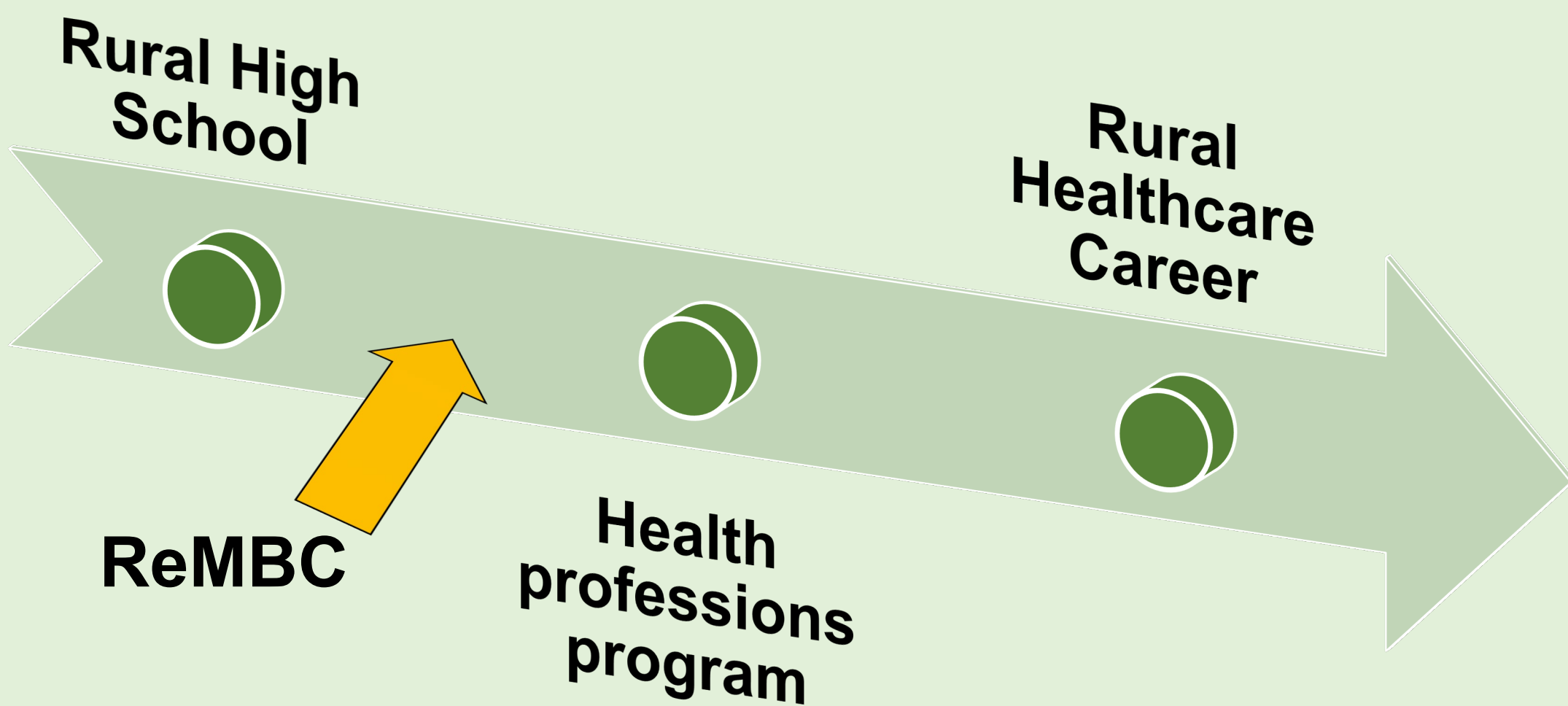
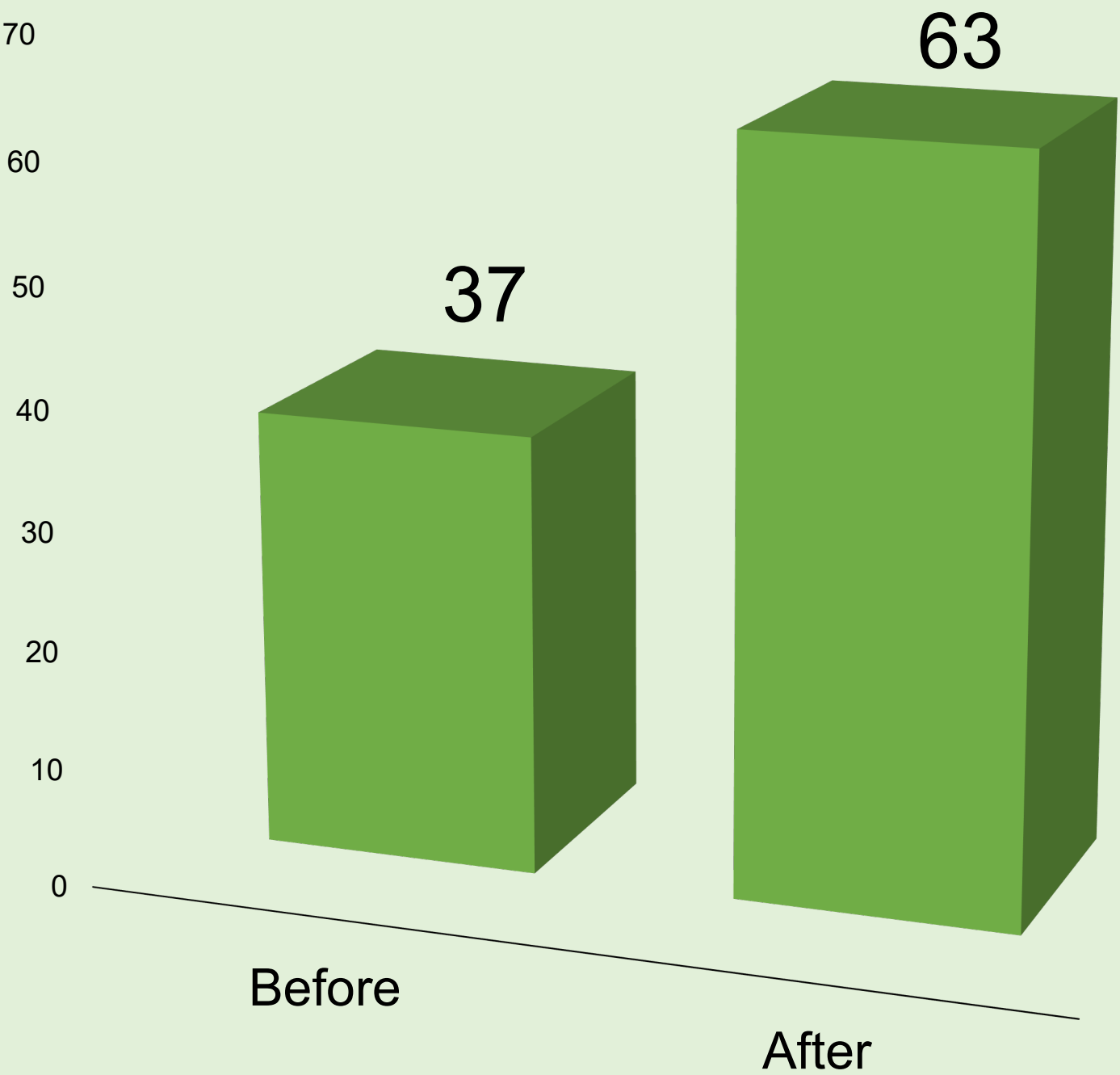
Online mentoring for rural high school students.

- Mentors: health professions students.
- Conversation topics: career exploration, educational pathways, rural-urban transition.
- Exchange messages through online platform.

## Analysis:

- Voluntary pre- and post-surveys.
- Quantitative questions: McNemar & Wilcoxon tests.
- Quantitative questions: Thematic analysis.

## Students interested in healthcare careers



## Results

- More students were interested in healthcare careers after participating in the program
- Attitudes towards post-secondary, rural-urban practice remained constantly positive.
- Mentees valued:
  - Opportunity to learn from mentor
  - Educational, career information & support
  - Learning life skills

## Conclusions

**ReMBC's Approach:** Can inspire and provide information and support for rural youth to pursue healthcare careers. Overcomes geographical barriers to outreach program delivery.

**Future studies:** Long-term effects on rural student representation in health professions programs, number of rural healthcare professionals.

